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SUBJECT: 6PT: ROKG READOUT ON SEPTEMBER 19 ENERGY MEETING
WITH DPRK

Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Yun. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

¶1. (S) On September 22, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) North Korea Nuclear Negotiation Division Director Kim Gunn debriefed embassy representatives from Russia, Japan, China and the United States on the September 19 Energy and Economic Working Group (EEWG) bilateral meeting with North Korean representatives. Kim said the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was "reassembling" then "reattaching" the parts to their original places at the Yongbyon reprocessing facility and some of this "reattachment was already done." DPRK head delegate Hyun Hak-bong told the ROKG that &there is a lot of room for reversal,8 if the energy assistance were to stop. Kim emphasized to embassy representatives that the ROKG did not intend to make any unilateral decisions regarding future EEWG deliveries and expected the same from other donor countries. The one-day meeting ended without any agreement or a date for a future meeting. The next ROK shipment is scheduled for mid-October.
End summary.

DPRK Confirms Restoration, But Uses Softer Language in Press Conference

¶2. (SBU) Unlike in previous bilateral EEWG meetings when the DPRK refused to address denuclearization issues, DPRK Chief Delegate Hyun Hak-bong spoke about delisting and disablement in an impromptu press conference before the delegation meeting. Hyun defended the DPRK's disablement efforts to the press, saying that the DPRK had finished about 90 percent of agreed disablement efforts, completed eight out of eleven disablement tasks, and discharged 4,470 spent fuel rods. Hyun added that the U.S. refusal to remove North Korea from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism caused the DPRK to cease disablement actions. He added that the delisting was a litmus test to judge U.S. intentions to give up its hostile policy, which had a great symbolic meaning to the DPRK. Hyun also told the press that the DPRK was &prepared8 to restore the nuclear facilities.

¶4. (S) When the press left the room, Hyun said that &we are8 restoring the nuclear facilities, currently reassembling then reattaching the parts to their original

places and confirmed that some of this reattachment was already done. Asked how long the restoration would take, Hyun answered only by sharing what he said was U.S. experts, estimate of two to three months before reoperating the facilities.

Unconfirmed Additional Seal Breakage

¶5. (S) While Hyun confirmed that a few seals had to be removed for the reversal of disablement, he did not clarify whether additional seals were broken or removed since then. Hyun said that U.S. and IAEA experts were on site and the DPRK was not hiding anything from U.S. experts.

Verification: Not Acceptable at Second Phase

¶6. (S) Hyun argued that the USG was seeking a verification method unacceptable to the DPRK during the Second Phase. The U.S. insistence on sampling and on-site verification were similar to the first nuclear crisis of 19938 and U.S. prewar activities in Iraq. Hyun added that accepting the U.S. proposal now would be an insult to the DPRK.

DPRK: Room for Reversal; ROKG: Need for Donor Coordination

¶7. (S) The ROKG expressed to the DPRK the donor countries, willingness to fulfill their obligations as previously agreed, but made clear that future energy and economic assistance would be linked to the July Agreement. The DPRK argued that the current situation was caused by the United States, not the DPRK, adding that if the energy assistance were to stop, the DPRK would have no choice but to act accordingly. &There is a lot of room for a reversal,8 Hyun said, pointing to the DPRK readiness to reverse the previously performed disablement procedures.

¶8. (S) Despite wide press coverage of the ROKG decision to postpone the next delivery in October, Kim confirmed that the ROKG has not yet decided on what to do with its upcoming mid-October shipment. Kim said the ROKG would take a &wait-and-see8 approach, postponing the decision until closer to the scheduled delivery date. Kim emphasized to embassy representatives that the ROKG did not intend to make any unilateral decisions regarding future EEWG deliveries and expected the same from other donor countries. He added that the September 19 meeting with the DPRK ended without any agreement or a date for a future meeting.

September 19 Schedule at Panmunjom

¶9. (S) Kim shared the following meeting schedule for September 19:

10:00 - 10:15 Heads of delegation meeting (ROK DG Hwang and DPRK DDG Hyun discussed the general agenda for the day; from the ROK side DG Hwang, Director Kim Gunn; DPRK side DDG Hyun, Chang Myung-hyun)

10:15 - 11:10 General session (with all delegation members)

11:20 - 12:00 Two parallel meetings

-- ROK MOFAT North Korean Nuclear Affairs DDG Kwon Yong-woo with DPRK National Planning Committee DG Jin Chul

-- Rest of the delegation

14:00 - 14:40 Another heads of delegation meeting

14:00 - 16:00 Experts meeting to discuss economic assistance

16:00 - 16:15 Last heads of delegation meeting

16:15 Return to capitols

¶10. (S) By way of background on the September 19 meeting, Kim said that the DPRK also requested a meeting with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce around the same time as the ROK-DPRK bilateral meeting. Judging from the DPRK,s refusal to hold a trilateral meeting with the ROK and China as previously proposed by the DPRK in July, Kim assessed that the DPRK had met with China already and came to the ROK-DPRK Panmunjom bilateral meeting with a list of HFO-equivalent materials which the Chinese could not provide.

¶11. (S) Kim then explained the difference between the Chinese and the ROK government processes in place for the economic and energy assistance to North Korea. The DPRK deals with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce; the Chinese Foreign Ministry is not necessarily involved with providing economic assistance. Also for the Chinese, detailed negotiations are executed by companies rather than governments, after broad government-to-government agreements on principles. In Seoul, the MOFAT is involved in both broad principles as well as details of any official agreement. (Note: the representative from the Chinese embassy did not comment on Kim,s remarks. End Note.)

¶12. (S) Kim said there was little time to prepare for the bilateral meeting last week. The September 19 bilateral meeting date and location were proposed by the DPRK in the afternoon of September 15. The ROKG responded on September

17, and the meeting took place two days later.

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